

*Ham.* You cannot Sir take from me any thing, that I will more willingly part withall, except my life, my life.

*Polon.* Fare you well my Lord.

*Ham.* These tedious old fooles.

*Polon.* You goe to seeke my Lord Hamlet; there hee is.

*Enter Rosincran and Guildenstern.*

*Rosin.* God saue you Sir.

*Guild.* Mine honour'd Lord?

*Rosin.* My most deare Lord?

*Ham.* My excellent good friends? How do'st thou Guildenstern? Oh, Rosincran; good Lads: How doe ye both?

*Rosin.* As the indifferent Children of the earth.

*Guild.* Happy, in that we are not ouer-happy: on Fortunes Cap, we are not the very Button.

*Ham.* Nor the Soales of her Shoo?

*Rosin.* Neither my Lord.

*Ham.* Then you liue about her waste, or in the middle of her fauour?

*Guild.* Faith, her priuates, we.

*Ham.* In the secret parts of Fortune? Oh, most true: she is a Strumpet. What's the newes?

*Rosin.* None my Lord; but that the World's growne honest.

*Ham.* Then is Doomesday neere: But your newes is not true. Let me question more in particular: what haue you my good friends, deserued at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to Prison hither?

*Guild.* Prison, my Lord?

*Ham.* Denmark's a Prison.

*Rosin.* Then is the World one.

*Ham.* A goodly one, in which there are many Confines, Wards, and Dungeons; *Denmarke* being one o'th' worst.

*Rosin.* We thinke not so my Lord.

*Ham.* Why then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

*Rosin.* Why then your Ambition makes it one: 'tis too narrow for your minde.

*Ham.* O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count my selfe a King of infinite space; were it not that I haue bad dreames.

*Guild.* Which dreames indeed are Ambition: for the very substance of the Ambitious, is meere shadow of a Dreame.

*Ham.* A dreame it selfe is but a shadow.

*Rosin.* Truly, and I hold Ambition of so ayry and light a quality, that it is but a shadowes shadow.

*Ham.* Then are our Beggers bodies; and our Monarchs and out-stretch Heroes the Beggers Shadowes: shall wee to th' Court: for, by my fey I cannot reason?

*Both.* Wee'l wait vpon you.

*Ham.* No such matter. I will not fort you with the rest of my seruants: for to speake to you like an honest man: I am most dreadfully attended; but in the beaten way of friendship, What make you at *Elsonower*?

*Rosin.* To visit you my Lord, no other occasion.

*Ham.* Begger that I am, I am even poore in thanks; but I thanke you: and sure deare friends my thanks are too deare a halfe peny; were you not sent for? Is it your owne inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come,

deale iustly with me: come, come; nay speake.

*Guild.* What should we say my Lord?

*Ham.* Why any thing. But to the purpose; you were sent for; and there is a kinde confession in your looks; which your modesties haue not craft enough to color, I know the good King & Queene haue sent for you.

*Rosin.* To what end my Lord?

*Ham.* That you must teach me: but let mee coniure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the Obligation of our euer-preserued loue, and by what more deare, a better proposer could charge you withall; be euen and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no.

*Rosin.* What say you?

*Ham.* Nay then I haue an eye of you: if you loue me hold not off.

*Guild.* My Lord, we were sent for.

*Ham.* I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation preuent your discovery of your secretie to the King and Queene: moult no feather, I haue of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custome of exercise; and indeed, it goes so heauenly with my disposition; that this goodly frame the Earth, seemes to me a sterill Promontory; this most excellent Canopy the Ayre, look you, this braue ore-hanging, this Maiesticall Roofe, fretted with golden fire: why, it appears no other thing to mee, then a foule and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of worke is a man! how Noble in Reason? how infinite in faculty? in forme and moving how expresse and admirable? in Action, how like an Angel? in apprehension, how like a God? the beauty of the world, the Parragon of Animals; and yet to mee, what is this Quintessence of Dust? Man delights not me; no, nor Woman neither; though by your smiling you seeme to say so.

*Rosin.* My Lord, there was no such stuffe in my thoughts.

*Ham.* Why did you laugh, when I said, Man delights not me?

*Rosin.* To thinke, my Lord, if you delight not in Man, what Lenton entertainment the Players shall receive from you: wee coated them on the way, and hither are they comming to offer you Seruice.

*Ham.* He that playes the King shall be welcome; his Maiesty shall haue Tribute of mee: the aduenturous Knight shal vse his Foyle and Target: the Louer shall not sigh gratis, the humorous man shall end his part in peace: the Clowne shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled a'th' sere: and the Lady shall say her minde freely; or the blanke Verse shall halt for't: what Players are they?

*Rosin.* Euen those you were wont to take delight in the Tragedians of the City.

*Ham.* How chanceth it they traualle? their residence both in reputation and profit was better both wayes.

*Rosin.* I thinke their Inhibition comes by the meanes of the late Innouation?

*Ham.* Doe they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the City? Are they so follow'd?

*Rosin.* No indeed, they are not.

*Ham.* How comes it? doe they grow rusty?

*Rosin.* Nay, their indeauour keeps in the wonted pace; But there is Sir an ayrie of Children, little Yases, that crye out on the top of question; and are most tyrannically clap't for't: these are now the fashi-

fashion, and to be-ratled the common Stages (so they call them) that many wearing Rapiers, are affraide of Goose-quils, and dare scarce come thither.

*Ham.* What are they Children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the Quality no longer then they can sing? Will they not say afterwards if they should grow themselves to common Players (as it is like most if their meanes are not better) their Writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their owne Succession.

*Rosin.* Faith there ha's bene much to do on both sides: and the Nation holds it no sinne, to tarre them to Controuersie. There was for a while, no money bid for argument, vntill the Poet and the Player went to Cuffes in the Question.

*Ham.* Is't possible?

*Guild.* Oh there ha's bene much throwing about of Braines.

*Ham.* Do the Boyes carry it away?

*Rosin.* I that they do my Lord, *Hercules* & his load too.

*Ham.* It is not strange: for mine Vnckle is King of Denmarke, and those that would make mowes at him while my Father liued; giue twenty, forty, an hundred Ducates a peece, for his picture in Little. There is something in this more then Naturall, if Philosophie could finde it out.

*Flourish for the Players.*

*Guild.* There are the Players.

*Ham.* Gentlemen, you are welcom to *Elsonower*: your hands, come: The appurtenance of Welcome, is Fashion and Ceremony. Let me comply with you in the Garbe, lest my extant to the Players (which I tell you must shew fairly outward) should more appeare like entertainment then yours. You are welcome: but my Vnckle Father, and Aunt Mother are decei'd.

*Guild.* In what my deere Lord?

*Ham.* I am but mad North-North-West: when the Winde is Southerly, I know a Hawke from a Handfaw.

*Enter Polonius.*

*Pol.* Well be with you Gentlemen.

*Ham.* Hearke you *Guildenstern*, and you too: at each eare a hearer: that great Baby you see there, is not yet out of his swathing clouts.

*Rosin.* Happily he's the second time come to them: for they say an old man is twice a child.

*Ham.* I will Prophesie. Hee comes to tell me of the Players. Mark it, you say right Sir: for a Monday morning 'twas so indeed.

*Pol.* My Lord, I haue Newes to tell you.

*Ham.* My Lord, I haue Newes to tell you. When *Rosinus* an Actor in Rome—

*Pol.* The Actors are come hither my Lord.

*Ham.* Buzz, buzz.

*Pol.* Vpon mine Honor.

*Ham.* Then can each Actor on his Asse—

*Polon.* The best Actors in the world, either for Tragedie, Comedie, Historie, Pastorall: Pastorall-Comickall. Historickall-Pastorall: Tragicall-Historickall: Tragicall-Comickall-Historickall-Pastorall: Scene indiuible, or Poem vnlimited. *Seneca* cannot be too heauy, nor *Plautus* too light, for the law of Wit, and the Liberty. These are the onely men.

*Ham.* O Iephtha Iudge of Israel, what a Treasure had'st thou?

*Pol.* What a Treasure had he, my Lord?

*Ham.* Why one faire Daughter, and no more,